



Dear Women Players,

It was with sadness that we heard of the passing of Catherine d'Ovidio and in this issue President Jan Kamras expresses sympathy to her family and Sevinc Atay does also on behalf of the EBL Women's Committee of which Catherine was a member 2010-14. Fellow countrymen and EBL Past Presidents José Damiani and Yves Aubry pay tribute to Catherine the extraordinary star that was much loved and admired by those whose paths she crossed.

We also remember Madame Lavazza known widely for her huge support of Bridge. President Jan expresses sympathy. Of interest is the page on 'Live Bridge or not' in Sweden, Scotland, Turkey, Denmark and Estonia; the latter holding their Team Championships live last weekend.

Our future looks bright when one reads the piece, written by Captain of the UW26 Norwegian team, Sven-Olai Høyland, on the path Norway's Bright Lights UW26 team took to arrive in the place of excellence that they have achieved.

Women are also acknowledged as achievers in Mark Horton's piece on Queen Christina as Christina Lund-Madsen plays a pivotal part in Online Bridge which has kept the spirit of our game alive until we all get back! Mark, Editor of BeBridge Magazine, has also shared his BeBridge piece which places Sevinc Atay, Anna Gulevich and Christina Lund-Madsen in the top 12 Bridge Influencers, the most influential personalities in Bridge.

The last page in this edition lets you know that we now have 20 top EBL Women's teams practicing and networking while preparing for the next European Team Championships.

Of importance is that women play their part in Executive positions which was the vision of EBL Women's Committee founder, Anna Maria Torlontano. We highlight the opportunity for women to be nominated to the WBF Executive. There are three places. Your NBO might consider nominating a woman and submit her name by October 4th.

Do you have news for this Newsletter?

Love to hear from you.

Stay Well,

Mary Kelly Rogers

Editor

BACK TO LIVE BRIDGE OR NOT?

IN THIS ISSUE:

Tributes to Catherine d'Ovidio

President Jan Kamras

Sevinc Atay

Jose Damiani

Yves Aubry

Live Bridge or Not?

Queen Christina and Women Influencers

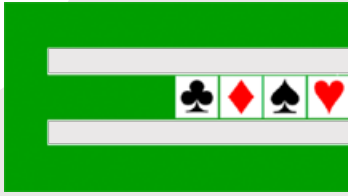
Norways UW26 Bright Lights

Maria Teresa Lavazza remembered

EBL Women's Updates

Is this the Future and for how long?





Catherine d'Ovidio (1959-2020)



**President of EBL
Jan Kamras**



The European Bridge Community is deeply saddened to hear of the death of Catherine d'Ovidio. Former world number one, double world champion in women's teams, five-time European women's team champion, Catherine was considered one of the most talented players of her generation.

Catherine was inducted into the EBL Hall of Fame earlier this year.

Our deepest condolences to her husband Pierre, her daughter Elodie, and her many friends and colleagues.



**EBL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
2018-2022**

Jan Kamras
President of EBL



**EBL Women's Committee
2018-2022**

**In Middle Sevinç Atay
Chairperson
Kari-Anne Opsal, Silvia Valentini
Katarzyna Dufrał (Kasia)
Mary Kelly Rogers
EBL Women's Committee
2018-2022**

It was very sad news for the world bridge community to hear about the untimely passing of famous French national player, Catherine d'Ovidio. I had the pleasure of working with her in the EBL. She was always promoting for more women to play in the national league. Catherine was always a very considerate and perfect player and was a member of the EBL Women's Committee 2010-14.

On my behalf and also on behalf of the EBL Women's Committee, I would like to send my deepest condolences to the whole bridge community.

Sevinç Atay
Chairwomen EBL Women's Committee

Tribute by José Damiani



José Damiani has written this moving tribute to Catherine D'Ovidio and it captures her very essence.

José is no stranger to us and his profile shows that he is up there at the top of the world administrative stage. The attributes are endless. See...

<http://www.worldbridge.org/biographies/jose-damiani/http://>

His tribute to Catherine along with many others can be read in the current issue of BeBridge and this 'Hommage' has been shared with us courtesy of Muriel Clément of BeBridge.

TEAMS

European Womens Teams Championships

- 1985, Salsomaggiore.
- 1995, Vilamoura.
- 2006, Warsaw.
- 2008, Pau.
- 2010, Ostend.

European Mixed Teams Championships

- 1996, Monaco.
- 1998, Aachen.

Women Teams World Champion

- 2005, Estoril.
- 2011, Veldhoven.

Multiple world and European transnational champion in Women and Mixed events.

PAIRS EVENTS

European Champion in Mixed Pairs

- 1990, Bordeaux.
- 2011, Poznan.

HOMMAGE

CATHERINE D'OVIDIO

I think I have gotten used to the idea of death - mine - but I still feel a sense of injustice when it comes to people who are close to me. Catherine was one of them. I remember the day when her parents accompanied her to the Raincy club where we - Léon Gamme our mentor, and me as well as Michel Perron and Colette Lise - immediately perceived that we were going to recruit a very talented young girl who had the means of taking on an ambition that she displayed almost immediately. She was not yet 18 years old. She was barely over 60 when she left us after dealing with this dreadful disease with admirable courage.



If her life was short, it has been full! I followed her throughout her career, which she conducted at full speed, as evidenced by her dazzling record of victories, to finish number one in the world, a position that suited her because she was so brilliant but also so much loved, despite her strong character. She was obviously surrounded with high level partners who have contributed to her greatest

successes, whether in Mixed with Paul Chemla or Philippe Cronier or in the womens with Véronique, Danièle, Sylvie and Bénédicte with whom she formed a team that performed amazingly well for years with the addition of Joanna and Vanessa. Being so often by her side as a friend, leader, captain, we shared a lot of joy, some sorrows, a lot of victories, some defeats.

We have traveled the world and all of Europe. She had the temperament of a leader which made her known as "Catherine the Great", while I personally prefer the expression "exceptional champion". This is by the way what earned her the recognition of the public authorities since she was first named a knight and then an officer in the National Order of Merit, medals that I had the honor to present to her, regretting with her (she fought for equality... and women's rights) that her teammates did not obtain them for reasons that remain unknown. She had just been inducted into the *Hall of Fame* of the European Bridge League but it is the bridge community of the whole world that mourns her today.

Your disappearance, dear Catherine, leaves a void that will never be filled even if you leave us as a legacy a new magnificent bridge player, your daughter Élodie whom I send a lot of kisses as well as your granddaughter Éléa and your dad, my friend, Jacky. And of course I address to your husband, Pierre, who supported you as much as he could, my most saddened condolences and all my sympathy.

We are here, always with you

José Damiani

Tribute by Yves Aubry

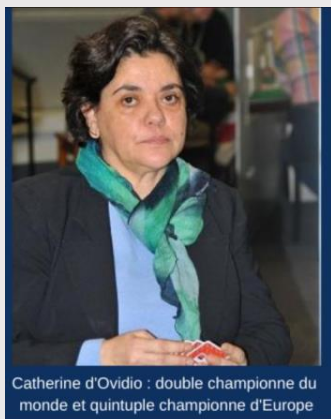


Yves served us well in Europe as EBL President retiring just a couple of years ago in 2018.

In Yves' tribute he lists Catherine's World and European titles, receiving her first European title after 7 years of playing, her contribution to administration in her role on the EBL Women's Committee and finally her coveted place in the EBL Hall of Fame just two months ago.

Again Yves' contribution to Bridge is endless and can be viewed in this link.

<http://www.worldbridge.org/biographies/yves-aubry/>



Catherine d'Ovidio : double championne du monde et quintuple championne d'Europe

Catherine d'OVIDIO (1959 – 2020)

Catherine d'OVIDIO, born on April 3, 1959, died on August 28, 2020 at the age of 61. She was known to be seriously ill since the end of 2019.

Catherine started Bridge in 1978 and from 1985 she joined the French women's team with which she won her 1st European title in Salsomaggiore, Italy.

Catherine went on to win with the French women's team 2 Venice Cups in 2005 and 2011, 5 European Bridge Championships in 1985, 1995, 2006, 2008 and 2010, as well as 4 silver and 6 bronze medals.

In Pairs, Catherine also won a 2004 world title with Paul Chemla and a 2011 European title with Philippe Cronier.

Not to mention multiple gold, silver or bronze medals in the WBF and EBL transnational championships including her last two titles in 2019 in mixed and women's teams in Istanbul playing with Marc Bompis and Sylvie Willard.

A long time #1 in the French rankings, Catherine d'Ovidio became #1 in the WBF rankings in 2006, a position she held for several years.

Catherine was Women World Grand Master and Women & Mixed European Grand Master. In 2020, she entered the EBL Hall of Fame and received her trophy in July.

Catherine served as a member in the EBL Women's Committee from 2010 to 2014 showing her willingness to contribute to the administrative part of Bridge.

Our sympathy to Jacques her father, Pierre her husband, Elodie her daughter and Elea her granddaughter.

Bridge has just lost an exceptional champion.

Yves Aubry



**Gold for Catherine and Women's Team
Istanbul
June 2019**



Sylvie WILLARD, Justyna ZMUDA, Catherine D'OVIDIO, Pierre ZIMMERMANN, Katarzyna DUFRAT, Tatiana PONOMAREVA, Tatiana DIKHNOVA

EBL Practice match players say.....



Sevinç Atay
Turkey



Carina
Wademark
Sweden



Liz McGowan
Scotland



Lone Bilde
Denmark

Live Bridge or Not?

EBL Women Practice Match Coordinators comment on Bridge in their country at present.

The bridge scene In **Turkey** is pretty much similar to the rest of Europe. All bridge clubs are closed and struggling to make ends meet. The Turkish Bridge Federation started paid tournaments on BBO, giving out Masterpoints. The proceeds from online tournaments are partly shared with the clubs to cover a fraction of their costs. Some number of clubs came together to run paid tournaments too. This helps the relatively smaller clubs with their routine costs. All clubs face the risk of closing down for good if the covid19 threat goes on for another year.

For **Sweden** some clubs have small pairs competitions with special safety rules, but it's rare. More and more clubs are opening up with the screens as on page 1 but most clubs remain closed.

We do have a lot of leagues on BBO, but really looking forward to the real tables again.

We unfortunately can't see it happening until 2021 :(
(Front page picture is courtesy of Carina).

Scottish Bridge Clubs cannot re-open for the foreseeable future: laws currently forbid more than 6 adults from no more than 2 households getting together indoors.

About half our members have registered for online tournaments; some others are managing the occasional rubber game in each other's homes.

We are concerned that some of the smaller clubs will never recover. The larger ones keep going with online tournaments on BBO.

Denmark was among the first countries in Europe to enforce a complete lock-down on its population from the beginning of March to June, forcing us all to stop playing live-bridge and join the virtual tables on BBO. After having swallowed the pain and sorrow of the cancellation of all international live bridge championships in 2020, actually, I came to play more during the three months of lock down than I ever did before.

Today, the Danish bridge clubs are open again and most members have returned to their beloved hobby and sport, which is only truly authentic with cards in the hands and with real people at the table. Although new restrictions are introduced almost every day due to increasing infection rates, all sit-down activity is still allowed in Denmark. Of course, life is not exactly the same as before at the table. Now, we play with our own bidding box, have our own deck of cards at the table, only one player can touch the Bridge-mate, and we use an awful amount of hand sanitizer. Further to this, in my club, there is thermometer at the door entry, and we play behind plexi-glass screens. The latter can be an advantage though, as it is difficult to hear your partner's post hoc analysis of the board you just played.

Maarja Oras' September Log



Maarja is Coordinator and Player for EBL Women's Practice matches Estonia

As to live bridge, in Estonia we've started getting back to more or less normal: both clubs and bigger tournaments are happening, with only the 50% requirement for rooms and of course disinfectants available to the players. (There is no mask requirement, as our Health Board doesn't strongly recommend wearing masks.) The first live tournament in the summer even had more participants than usual, probably because people had missed live bridge so much. Right now, we're preparing for the Estonian Teams' Championship which was cancelled in the spring and will hopefully happen in two weeks. I'm saying 'hopefully', because right now, COVID numbers have started rising again in Estonia, so it can't be excluded that the tournament will have to be cancelled. I'll let you know if that happens, so that the newsletter article will be up to date. It will be interesting to see how different countries have coped with bridge in these conditions!

Estonia plays National Championships

(cont'd) September 16th

Since I promised you an update, I wanted to let you know that our national championship is still taking place this weekend. There has now been a decision on some additional rules: use of a thermometer, hand disinfectants available in each section, tables are spaced as wide apart as possible, bids must be explained in writing only (i.e. no whispering close to the opp's face), each player gets an individual bidding box for the whole tournament, and there is the possibility of an additional replacement player in the team. Use of masks is still voluntary, but masks are provided by the organiser for those who need them. Sadly, my own team has some additional complications, since one of our 3 pairs is Latvian, and Latvia has a 14-day-quarantine rule for countries with the infection rate over 16 (which includes Estonia). So unfortunately, it is likely that we will have to play with 2 pairs (our Latvian friends unfortunately cannot afford the quarantine, work-wise), unless a different decision is made by the Latvian government by Friday.

September 17th

Latvian Friends still in doubt

September 19th

There was some uncertainty due to that, but ultimately, our Latvian friends decided to come despite the quarantine requirement afterwards....

September 20th

...and helped us win silver medals! 🏆 (my partner is another member of the women's team, Aire Taube)"



The number of teams was standard, as the format is league-based: 8 teams in A-league, 8 in B-league, 2 best/worst move up/down, and there are trials each year for entry into B-league. All of the teams in both A- and B-league participated, even though a few of the players stayed home.



Estonia has had few cases of Covid-19 and now enjoy a little normality but not completely.

Mark Horton



Mark Horton, editor of BeBridge Magazine, highlights the work of Christina Lund-Madsen of Denmark and thus highlights the significant contribution women make to Bridge.

Christina also features in the third edition of BeBridge in an article '12 Bridge Influencers'. The 12 most influential personalities in Bridge. Christina as WARRIORESS.

Also in this list of 12 is Chair of the EBL Women's Committee, Sevinç Atay as ACCOMPLISHED AMBASSADOR along with Champion Anna Gulevich as ACCOMPLISHED SPORTSWOMAN.

Mark follows his Queen Christina piece by sharing hands focusing on leads.

Thank you Mark.

Queen Christina

Apologies to those among you who are hoping for a learned piece about the famous Swedish queen famously portrayed on screen by the legendary Greta Garbo. However, the Christina of my title does hail from a Scandinavian country, Denmark. I'm referring to Christina Lund-Madsen, rapidly making a reputation for herself as both a player and a writer.

Until recently she was Editor of the Danish Bridge Federation's magazine and she is currently in charge of the Daily Bulletins for the Online ALT events. One of her specialties is in depth interviews in which she is not afraid to ask personal questions. In the Bulletins from the latest ALT event she spoke with David Gold, a Member of the



Credentials Advisory Team that oversees the entry lists for the ALT, OCBL and Bridgehouse Online events. He revealed that approximately 29 players had been refused entry. Make a note of upcoming editions of the ALT, (the next one is 21-25 September) you will be able to follow the matches live on BBO and read all about them in the Bulletins. The full list is at:

<https://alt.bridgeresults.org/> Maria Hjort Jacobsen

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**CHRISTINA
LUND
MADSEN**



#WARRIORESS

"Playing bridge is like being on the battlefield for me," says Christina Lund Madsen.

A professional player, until recently editor in charge of the Danish magazine Dansk Bridge and a great enthusiast, in 2015 she received a royal scholarship from Prince Henrik of Denmark for her leading role in the bridge community. Known for her zest for life and her

enthusiasm, this bridgeuse-journaliste nevertheless proves to be tenacious and determined. She confides that "It is not always easy to be a woman,

young and blonde, coming from a country of five million inhabitants, with a big mouth and the desire to conquer the world of bridge". Nevertheless, Christina Lund Madsen's gamble has been a success, and she is far from having said her last word. Currently, she occupies a central place in the organization of the "Alt Invitational" online events.

Text can be read clearly on next page

BRIDGE INFLUENCERS

Christina Lund Madsen WARRIORESS

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DEALS WITH LEADS

Mark Horton

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Here is a sample of what you might (or might not) expect to see - try the first one as a lead problem:

Dealer North. None Vul.

♠	Q 9 7 4 3
♥	K J 5
♦	K Q 5 3
♣	7

West	North	East	South
—	1♠	Pass	1NT
Pass	2♦	Dble*	Pass
3NT	All Pass		

Dble Diamonds

Having decided to open your modest collection you now find yourself on lead. By the way, I should perhaps mention that the player on your right is none other than Zia. What do you choose?

Sometimes a player's choice of opening lead is obvious, on other occasions it requires more. East, who did not overcall on the first round, now doubles 2♦, allowing for the possibility that partner will pass. Most players will overcall with a six-card suit, so logically East can only have five diamonds. They must be good ones and we can also conclude that East must have some other high cards.

#AMBASSADOR OF THE GAME

In order to keep the world of bridge welcoming and accessible to everyone, **Sevinç Atay** has been committed for many years to the integration of women and youth in our great gaming community. She has been awarded numerous national titles as champion, and as coordinator of several large-scale events; she also received the World Federation's gold medal in 2014. Serving the Turkish federation since 1998, her international career as administrator began in 2003, when she joined the ranks of the world federation and the European league to occupy leading positions. In both organizations she has several times been representative of the women's committee and the youth committee, and has always been faithful to her commitments. Her efforts have included the creation of bridge schools and summer camps to introduce young people to the game and to pass on the torch. *"It is with great pride that I see my work recognized. I am continuing my efforts to promote bridge, especially for women and young people, but I am already happy to see global synergy in the right direction."*



What of West's actions?

He could not bid over 1NT, but now thinks he has a play for game? How can that be? Here the clue lies in your singleton club - the most likely reason for West's bid is that he hopes to score a lot of club tricks.

Since we know dummy will have a sound diamond stopper there is little point in leading that suit, so the choice lies between a spade and a heart. Both require partner to have something useful, but declarer did see our opening bid, so it is reasonable to assume that he has a spade stopper.

Have you made your choice?

As David Frost would have said, 'It's time to go through the keyhole' as we take a look at the full deal:

Dealer North. None Vul.

	♠	Q 9 7 4 3		♠	A J 6 5
	♥	K J 5		♥	6 3 2
	♦	K Q 5 3		♦	A J 9 8 7
	♣	7		♣	3
♠	K 10 8		♠	2	
♥	9 7		♥	A Q 10 8 4	
♦	10		♦	6 4 2	
♣	A K Q J 10 9 6		♣	8 5 4 2	

North led a red king - naturally it was in diamonds and declarer won with dummy's ace and cashed his clubs. By the time he had finished the spades were good for four tricks, +490.

Don't you just love Zia's pass.

In the other room things were less dramatic:

West	North	East	South
Brogeland	de Wijs	Lindqvist	Muller
—	1♠	Pass	2♦*
3♣	3♥	All Pass	

2♦ Transfer to hearts, limited to invitational

A club lead and a diamond switch saw East win and give his partner a ruff. Even though West then exited with a club there were only eight tricks, -50 and Gupta had 10 IMPs.

Is it worth mentioning that simply leading trumps beats 3♥ by a couple of tricks - another deal for Brother Hubert's collection.



→12
INFLUENCERS
THE 12 MOST INFLUENTIAL
PERSONALITIES IN BRIDGE

BRIDGE WORLD
DECEMBER 2020
FILE
#1

#ACCOMPLISHED SPORTSWOMAN
Mainly known for her exploits in Russia, Anna Gulevich enjoys a growing popularity internationally. Her victory in 2012 at the World Games in Lille marked the beginning of her rise on the world stage. After winning numerous titles - including some together with her bridge and life partner Andrey Gromov - this sportswoman experienced a decisive turning point in 2019. That year, she left her important position in a large company to devote herself entirely to bridge; as a champion, but also through numerous projects for the integration of new players and the recognition of women in bridge. A risky bet, rewarded with a world title in Wuhan, which has redoubled her determination. "A woman player has to put in a lot more effort to be recognized or to get a salary comparable to her male counterparts. I would like to contribute to changing that."

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JACEK
PSZCZOLA

Anna Gulevich

ACCOMPLISHED SPORTSWOMAN

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David Bird's famous trump leading monk would also have enjoyed this deal:

Dealer West. NS Vul.

	♠	A K 7 4	♠	J 9 8 5 3 2
	♥	K Q J 9 5 4	♥	A 6
	♦	J 9	♦	2
	♣	A	♣	J 9 7 6
♠	Q 6		♠	10
♥	10 8 7		♥	3 2
♦	A 10 5 4		♦	K Q 8 7 6 3
♣	K Q 4 3		♣	10 8 5 2

Open Room

West	North	East	South
Klukowski	Bessis	Zatorski	Volcker
Pass	1♥	2♠	Pass
3♣	4♥	All Pass	

East led the ♦2 and when West brilliantly followed with the four declarer won with the jack, cashed the ♣A, the ♠A, ruffed a spade, ruffed a club and played a heart for the queen and ace. East needed to play a spade at this point, but for some reason he returned the ♣7 and declarer was home, +620.

Closed Room

West	North	East	South
de Wijs	Di Franco	Muller	Manno
1NT*	Dble	3♠*	Pass
Pass	4♥	All Pass	

1NT 9-12
3♣ To play

Once again East led his diamond (Brother Hubert rang me to point out the merit of starting with two rounds of trumps) and West won and returned the four, East ruffing and playing a club. Declarer won, cashed the ♠A, ruffed a spade and played a heart for the king and ace. Back came the ♠8 and West's ruff was the setting trick. Even had declarer found the winning play of the ♥K after taking the ♣A it would not have ALTERed the result of the match, Gupta winning the last set 52-0!

Thought. One has to examine the evidence, in the manner of Holmes or Poirot before making a decision. What is going on here?

Sven-Olai Høyland



Sven-Olai Høyland took on the captaincy of the Norwegian U26 team and excelled even though his hectic professional life was teaching computer science at Western Norway University of Applied Sciences.

His teaching skills plus his notable Bridge record of winning the European Open Team Championship in 2017 and winning several national championships made him the ideal person to bring the U26 Women's team to a place of excellence. They won the World Youth Transnational Bridge Championship in Croatia in 2019 (both pairs and teams).

The Norwegian U26 team's story begins with Sven-Olai Høyland as Captain and Rosaline Barendregt as coach. They started a journey that ended in success and now Sven tells the story.

Sven-Olai Høyland

Captain for Norway U26, 2000 – 2010
Instructor junior camp, 2012 -
Captain for Norway U26W, 2013 –
Sven-Olai Høyland, 59 years. PhD in
Computer Science. Teaching
computer science at Western
Norway University of Applied
Sciences. Won the European Open
Team Championship in 2017. Sven-
Olai has also won several national
championships.

NORWAY'S UW26 BRIGHT LIGHTS

The start

Norway participated in the European U26 Women team championships in 2007 and 2009. This was a private initiative from the players; our federation just covered the entry fee and provided the National team t-shirts. In December 2012, I was asked to train a U26W team with the goal to participate in the European Championship in Tromsø (Norway) 2.5 years later. To be honest, I was not sure I could even find four girls that were playing regularly. After receiving a list of all female members under 26, I started calling surprised parents. Even if their daughter played bridge, they had not expected her to be in the national team. I found five interested players, of which the youngest was only 10.



Luckily, Rosaline Barendregt was interested in being the coach. She had recent experience from U26W championships playing for The Netherlands, earning several medals, including a gold medal in 2005. We faced several challenges, one of which was that the players lived in different parts of Norway, to be able to meet in person, so

practicing had to be done on BBO. In the beginning, the main focus was developing a common system. After a while we also had mini-lectures on play and defence.

In March 2013, they entered our Women Teams Championship and finished 21 out of 30 teams. Not bad! Later that year we also played U26W European Championship in Poland finishing on an impressive sixth place, out of nine. This was two years earlier than planned. Even though I am the captain for the U26W team, I have made it clear that they must not consider themselves as female bridge players, but bridge players.



The first time the team met (winter 2013): From left: Charlotte Mikkelsen, Thea Hove Hauge, Marte Haugen Klingen, Stine Frøyse and Sofie Græsholt Sjødal

Our players

By Sofie Græsholt Sjødal



Agnethe Hansen Kjensli is the player who appeared out of thin air and after she learnt the game, no one

could stop her. If she was not playing live bridge, you knew you could find her on BBO. She became a part of the U26W team after about half a year, and before three years around the green table she had already gotten a European gold medal, the first of several international medals.



Ida Marie Øberg is the team's encourager, if anyone needs a hug, Ida is there. The opponents

might also need a hug after playing against her, because she might steal all the tricks from them. Her biggest highlight so far is The Open World Youth Teams Championship in 2019 where she became a world champion in both U26W teams and pairs. She is only 18 years old, so this is not the last we have seen of her.

Continuation

We continued to practise on BBO and met twice in real life, connected with a big teams tournament and the Women Teams Championship. These days started with theory, followed by playing and discussions. Unfortunately, Rosaline had to quit due to other obligations in 2016 and Elisabeth Græsholt Sjødal replaced her as coach. Elisabeth is Sofie's mother and knew the girls well because she had travelled to the various tournaments because her daughter was only 10 when we started. She is also a good player and have qualified for the final in the Norwegian Team Championship (8 teams out of more than 200).

The team has not managed to win medals in The European Championships, but we have qualified for The World Championships. In 2016 we won bronze and in 2018 we reached the quarterfinal where we were beaten by The Netherlands.

The most exiting match I have ever kibitzed was in Italy in 2016 during the World Championship. Just four players from the team that qualified were available. In case of sickness we also brought Agnethe Hansen Kjensli, who had played for just half a year, to be on the team. She learnt bridge very quickly and was obviously a great talent. After 8 rounds we had done well and were going to meet the reigning World and European champions, France, the next morning. At breakfast I was told that one of the experienced players was ill and that Agnethe had to play. She played almost perfect, in spite of being extremely nervous and we won the match by 5 IMPs. In the end we qualified for the knockout stage and won the bronze medal in this World Championship!



Bronze in World Championship 2016:
Front from left: Sofie Græsholt Sjødal, Thea Lucia Indrebø, Agnethe Hansen Kjensli, Katarina Ekren and Thea Hove Hauge.
Back: Elisabeth Græsholt Sjødal and Sven-Olai Høyland



Thea Lucia Indrebø is the happy girl in the team, but do not get tricked by her smile,

because she definitely knows how to take her tricks. In August last year she exceeded everyone by winning both the U26W teams and pairs championship and the triathlon, going home with three gold medals around her neck.



Kaja Brekke is the youngest girl in the team, but do not think that means she is an inexperienced

player, because she has played bridge since 2013. She has experience from the U16 team, and she helped the U26W team to gold in her first international championship for the U26W team, in The Nordic Championship in April last year.



Katarina Ekren always makes sure everyone is happy with a funny comment. However,

there is no fun for the opponents after she is done playing her hands. The Norwegian ladies could experience this last year during the Norwegian Women Teams Championship when she got the silver medal and won the butler.

2019 – A great bridge year for young female players in Norway

The year started with four of the players winning silver medals in the Women Teams Championship. Later two players qualified for the final (8 teams from more than 200 that entered) in our national Open Teams Championship. Then, for the first time in Norwegian history, two female players qualified for the open U26 team, previously only male players had been selected.

After all these fabulous achievements, the highlight was The World Youth Transnational Bridge Championship in Croatia. Thea Lucia Indrebø and Ida Marie Øberg won the pairs tournament followed by Agnethe Hansen Kjensli and Sofie Græsholt Sjødal in second place. The same four players also won the gold medal in the teams tournament.

The only disappointment was that we did not manage to win a medal in the European U26W, but we qualified for the World Championship. Hopefully, we fight for the medals there.



Thea Lucia Indrebø, Ida Marie Øberg, Agnethe Hansen Kjensli and Sofie Græsholt Sjødal won Gold at the World Youth Transnational Bridge Championship in Croatia.

NORWAY EUROPEAN U26 TEAM CHAMPIONS



Thea Hove Hauge is the pretty, blond girl, but do not be fooled, she knows just how to play her

contracts. She was one of the original players from the U26W team in 2013, but in 2019 she took the step over to the open U26 team, as one of the two first girls to ever play a championship for the Norwegian open U26 team. Thea was a part of the U26W team in 2016 when they got the bronze in The World Youth Teams Championship.



Sofie Græsholt Sjødal is the “mother” of the team, and in spite of often being the youngest one she always made sure

everyone was doing what they were supposed to. She is no longer a player on the team since she changed over to the U26 open team last year, but she will always be a U26W-player in our hearts and is always happy to help. In 2018 she became a double European champion after winning both The Open Mix and Women Youth Pairs tournaments.



European Championship 2019. From left: Elisabeth Græsholt Sjødal, Agnethe Hansen Kjensli, Ida Øberg, Thea Lucia Indrebø, Kaja Brekke, Katarina Ekren and Sven-Olai Høyland

Positive side effects

In our latest national junior camp about half of the 85 participants were female. Many people think that the U26W team has some impact for this success. For young girls at the camp it is not Helgemo and Helness or our best female players that are the stars. It is the girls in the U26W team. Some of these girls even have a goal to qualify for the team.

The girls teach bridge courses both online and live. They have also assisted in different events for young players such as our School Championships.

Final thoughts

It also reassuring to see that our U16 team contain girls. Sigrunn Faag and Maren Idland Sægrov are in the team that won the World Bridge Federation Youth Online Teams League this year.

I encourage all federations to also participate in the U26W category. The players will get valuable experience, and may compete for places in women, mix and even open national teams. Also, it will make it easier to recruit more young bridge players.

Sven-Olai Høyland



We are all deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Madame Maria Teresa Lavazza. She supported many championships over the past decades by supplying the players with endless quantities of her family's excellent Lavazza coffee.



An excellent player herself, her support of and participation in the Lavazza sponsored bridge team is renowned across the globe. We extend our sincere sympathy to her family and many friends – she will be deeply missed.

May she rest in peace.

Jan Kamras
President of EBL

Alfredo Versace remembers Maria Teresa Lavazza

22 JULY 2020



Picture by Elisabeth van Ettinger

I have known Maria Teresa since I was a child, because I used to spend my summer evenings with her children Giuseppe and Francesca, at my aunt Marisa's restaurant on the hill, or sometimes in their holiday home in the mountains. When I started playing bridge, Italo Santia spotted my talent and started mentoring me, giving me advice and teaching me the most important things, including how to behave at the table and in life. I was only 15 when Maria Teresa and Italo decided to take me to Italian Championships. We won with Belladonna, Garozzo and Guermani. Initially I was nervous in her presence, but gradually we developed a beautiful relationship.

We had great success as a Lavazza team first and then as the National team. Lavazza was a winner. She encouraged you to be your best; she was a leader. One day I decided to move to Angelini's team, because I wanted to live in Rome, close to my children, and reduce my commute. These reasons were valid and yet not sufficient to drop her in favour of her main opponent...and she forgave me. Her generosity was second to none.

Our greatest success was the World Championships in Estoril. Ortensi and she got right every single line up; including the crucial final round (against the USA) where she decided to field the youngest pair (Fantoni-Nunes). And what about the Europeans in Ostend, where Maria Teresa insisted on fielding an Argentinian boy who had been living in Italy for a while: this decision was not popular but it proved right. We won thanks to him and all who criticised her shut up. Today, this young boy is considered the best player in the world and I agree: he is Agustin Madala.

Maria Teresa was like that: she was able to spot talent and turn them into champions. From today we will be more lonely: Italian and world bridge alike will miss her. Now I have a dream: to dedicate to her our medal (perhaps the gold one) in the next Championships, together with Massimo Ortensi (her squire, right hand and coach).

Alfredo Versace

Article has been taken from the Neapolitan Club and can be viewed in this link <http://neapolitanclub.altervista.org/eng/alfredo-versace-remembers-maria-teresa-lavazza.html>



Here is a link to the last Newsletters.
<http://www.eurobridge.org/2020/01/15/ebl-womens-newsletter/>

If you have a team for

**EBL WOMEN'S PRACTICE
MATCHES
ONLINE**

Please email eblwomen@gmail.com with contact details of your Team Practice Co Ordinator. Also If you have an item of news for the Newsletter that would be of interest to EBL Women. Please email us.

Catherine d'Ovidio Tributes

Thank you

President Jan Kamras
José Damiani
Sevinç Atay
Yves Aubry

Contributors

Thank you

Mark Horton
Sven-Olai Høyland
Sofie Græsholt Sjødal
Maarja Oras
Carina Wademark
Sevinç Atay
Liz McGowan
Lone Bilde

EBL WOMEN'S UPDATES

EBL Women's Practice Matches

There are currently 20 teams in our weekly/twice monthly Practice matches. Participating countries are: - Norway, Sweden, Scotland, Estonia, Italy, Israel, Turkey, Netherlands, Ireland, Germany, Hungary, Switzerland, Wales, Russia 1, Russia 2, Denmark, Greece, Malta, Portugal and Austria.

WBF ELECTIONS - Women Candidates

'WBF general assembly will be held on 3rd Nov. There will be an election of 3 new members to the WBF executive council from different Zones. **We need more women** at the EC and we should promote a **female** candidate. The **nomination** must be forwarded **before 4th October**'.

Nominations are through your NBO's

Time is running out

For more information:

<http://www.worldbridge.org/2020/09/03/2020-wbf-meeting-of-congress/>

Remember at the EBL Officers' Seminar in 2017 we highlighted
.....



Anna Maria Torlontano

In 1985 founded the Women's Committee

so **'that women...would not only have full participation in Bridge**

... but be active on Executive Bridge Unions throughout Europe'

33 years ago

It's now 36 years!